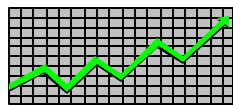


VETERANS' SATISFACTION WITH CORRESPONDENCE:

Data from the 1997 and 1998 Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction with the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process

(Prepared for the Reader Focused Writing Committee)

Bringing the
"Voice of the Customer"
into Decisionmaking



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When looking at the 10 correspondence-related questions from the “Survey of Veterans’ Satisfaction with the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process” there were no significant improvements from 1997 to 1998. However, it is still too early to tell whether or not Reader Focused Writing (RFW) will have any impact on veterans understanding of correspondence coming from VA. Comparing the trends in the upcoming years will give us more of an actual look at the impact (RFW) may have since all letters, form letters, etc. have not been completely rewritten and are not currently in use at every RO.

Some of the differences/trends contained in this report are as follows:

- Veterans would prefer to phone the VA for explanations of VA letters to writing or visiting.
- Respondents applying for Reopened Compensation claims (020) who thought VA’s letter explained the decision in a way they could understand steadily increased with educational level. (less than high school education, 61.0 percent; some high school, 63.8 percent; high school graduate, 67.2 percent; some college, 69.0 percent; and college graduate, 71.5 percent.)
- Very few veterans (in all EP’s) would prefer mail as the method of contact to all other methods.
- The total percentage of veterans applying for Reopened Pension (EP 120) claims who thought VA’s letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision decreased from 83.7 percent in 1997 to 78.5 percent in 1998.
- The total percentage of veterans applying for Dependency Issue (EP 130) claims who thought VA’s letter explained the reason for the decision in a way they could understand decreased from 86.1 percent in 1997 to 83.5 percent in 1998.
- The total percentage of veterans applying for Income, Estate, or Election (EP 150) claims who thought VA’s letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision decreased from 86.0 percent in 1997 to 83.4 percent in 1998.
- The total percentage of veterans applying for Initial Disability Pension (EP 180) claims who thought VA’s letter explained the decision in a way they could understand decreased from 87.8 percent in 1997 to 79.3 percent in 1998.

I. BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

The following data were taken from the 1997 and 1998 National results of the “Survey of Veterans’ Satisfaction with the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process” (*see methodology section). This is the first time VBA has had data to analyze the effectiveness and ease of reading/understanding/comprehending correspondence sent to veterans from the regional offices.

Ten questions were selected from the “Survey of Veterans’ Satisfaction with the VA Compensation and Pension Claims Process” that pertained to written correspondence from VBA to veterans. The ten questions were split and sorted by EP (End Product) codes since the type of correspondence sent to veterans varies from one EP to another. However, there is no way of knowing precisely what types of correspondence the veterans are referring to when answering the survey questionnaire.

These results were prepared primarily for VBA’s Reader Focused Writing Committee.

The following benefits (“end products”) are represented in the sample:

010	Initial Disability Compensation Claim (8 or more issues)
020	Reopened Compensation Claim
110	Initial Disability Compensation Claim (less than 8 issues)
120	Reopened Pension Claim
130	Dependency Issue
140	Initial Survivors Compensation, DIC, or Death Compensation
150	Income, Estate, or Election Issue
180	Initial Disability Pension Claim
190	Initial Survivors Pension Claim

II. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

National results for 1997 are based on data collected between November 1997 and February 1998. A 57th regional office, San Juan, was surveyed for the first time between February and April 1998. National results for both 1997 and 1998 are based on calculations including all 57 surveyed regional offices. National results for 1998 are based on data collected between October 1998 and January 1999. Essentially, the same questionnaire and methodology were used for all survey efforts, allowing comparable customer feedback across time and across regional offices.

III. 1998 NATIONAL SUMMARY

1998 NATIONAL SUMMARY FINDINGS

EP CODE COMPARISONS

- Nationally, respondents were more than twice as likely to phone VA for an explanation of a VA letter compared with respondents who wrote or visited the VA for an explanation. (16.9 percent versus 8.3 percent and 8.1 percent.)
- Respondents applying for Initial Disability Compensation claims (EP 110) were the least likely of claimants of all EP's to receive written replies from VA in response to their letters. (65.5 percent.)
- Respondents applying for Income, Estate, or Election (EP 150) benefits were the most likely to receive written replies from VA in regards to their letter. (78.6 percent.)
- Veterans applying for Dependency Issues (EP 130) were more likely to think it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written replies than veterans applying for Reopened Compensation (EP 020) claims. (66.2 percent versus 58.7 percent.)
- Respondents applying for Reopened Compensation (EP 020) claims were the least likely to think overall, they received all or most of what they needed to know from VA's written reply (41.2 percent); respondents applying for Income/Estate or Election (EP 150) benefits were the most likely. (60.4 percent.)
- Persons applying for Initial Survivors Compensation, DIC, or Death Compensation (EP140) were much more likely than persons applying for Reopened Compensation (EP 020) claims to think VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision, (87.2 percent versus 73.0 percent); and thought VA's letter explained the decision in a way the veteran could understand. (86.6 percent versus 68.1 percent.)
- The percentage of respondents who thought the appeals process was clearly explained increased from those applying for Initial Disability Compensation claims (EP 010) to those applying for Initial Survivors Compensation, DIC, or Death Compensation (EP 140). (63.1 percent versus 81.0 percent.)
- Respondents applying for Reopened Pension (EP 120) Claims were more than twice as likely as than respondents applying for Initial Disability Compensation (EP 110) to prefer mail as the method of contact from VA if all methods were equal. (20.8 percent versus 10.0 percent.)
- Overall, claimants applying for Reopened Compensation (EP 020) were generally the least likely types of all EP's to be satisfied with correspondence or the ease of understanding VA's correspondence.

1998 EP CODE COMPARISONS

Question	National Total	EP 010	EP 020	EP 110	EP 120	EP 130	EP 140	EP 150	EP 180	EP 190
1. Percent who phoned VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	16.9	*	16.0	16.9	14.9	17.7	*	18.3	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	8.1	*	7.2	*	*	8.2	*	12.1	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	8.3	*	8.1	*	*	8.1	*	9.0	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	73.4	*	72.7	65.5	76.2	73.3	*	78.6	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	63.2	*	58.7	65.4	65.8	66.2	*	60.4	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	52.3	*	41.2	54.5	53.9	58.6	*	60.4	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	79.9	80.4	73.0	76.0	78.5	85.6	87.2	83.4	84.0	84.8
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	76.4	73.7	68.1	74.9	76.9	83.5	86.6	78.0	79.3	83.6
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	74.4	63.1	72.3	64.7	74.4	80.5	81.0	79.5	68.8	69.0
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	15.9	*	14.7	10.0	20.8	15.0	*	20.0	19.9	19.5

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

NOTE: There were no key results for this EP.

EP 010 - INITIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION 8+

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	80.4	82.4	*	*	81.6	*	*	*	*	*	76.7	82.9
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	73.7	74.8	*	*	74.2	*	*	*	*	*	69.2	*
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	63.1	63.6	*	*	60.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

EP 020 - REOPENED COMPENSATION

- Respondents age 75+ were much more likely than respondents age 35-54 to receive written replies from VA in response to their letter. (79.3 percent versus 69.6 percent.) The percentage of respondents receiving written replies steadily increased with age.
- Respondents age 55-74 were much more likely than respondents age 18-34 to think the appeals process was clearly explained. (79.2 percent versus 67.7 percent.)
- Respondents who preferred mail as the method of contact (if all methods were equal) increased with age from 12.9 percent (age 35-54) to 19.6 percent (age 75+).
- The percentage of respondents who phoned VA for an explanation of a VA letter steadily increased with education level. (High school graduates, 13.7 percent; some college education 16.2 percent; and college graduates 18.3 percent.)
- College graduates were much less likely than high school graduates to receive a written reply from VA in response to their letter. (68.7 percent versus 76.8 percent.)
- The percentage of respondents who thought VA's letters clearly explained all reasons for the decision increased as educational levels increased. (less than high school; 68.4 percent; some high school, 71.1 percent; high school graduate, 72.0 percent; some college, 73.8 percent; and college graduate, 75.6 percent.)
- Respondents who thought VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand steadily increased with educational level. (less than high school education, 61.0 percent; some high school, 63.8 percent; high school graduate, 67.2 percent; some college, 69.0 percent; and college graduate, 71.5 percent.)

EP 020 - REOPENED COMPENSATION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	16.0	15.7	17.9	*	15.4	16.6	*	*	*	<i>13.7</i>	<i>16.2</i>	<i>18.3</i>
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	7.2	7.2	*	*	8.1	*	*	*	*	*	7.0	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	8.1	8.2	*	*	8.8	8.4	*	*	*	*	8.3	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	72.7	72.8	70.9	*	69.6	75.8	79.3	*	*	76.8	72.1	68.7
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	58.7	58.4	*	*	58.4	59.6	55.6	*	*	62.2	57.2	60.9
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	41.2	41.1	*	*	40.4	45.0	*	*	*	44.9	38.5	43.9
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	73.0	73.0	76.2	77.7	71.6	75.5	70.0	<i>68.4</i>	<i>71.1</i>	<i>72.0</i>	<i>73.8</i>	<i>75.6</i>
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	68.1	68.0	70.0	70.6	66.7	69.9	68.0	61.0	<i>63.8</i>	<i>67.2</i>	<i>69.0</i>	71.5
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	72.3	73.1	67.6	67.7	68.1	79.2	73.7	70.0	71.0	73.2	72.6	74.1
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	14.7	14.7	*	*	<i>12.9</i>	<i>15.8</i>	<i>19.6</i>	*	*	13.9	13.3	14.4

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

Italicized Text – Increased or Decreased with Age or Education Level

EP 110 - INITIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION <=7 ISSUES

- Claimants who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision declined with age and increased as educational level increased. (age 18-34, 77.2 percent; age 35-54, 76.2 percent; age 55-74, 74.3 percent) (high school graduate, 73.3 percent; some college, 75.8 percent; college graduate, 77.9 percent.)
- Claimants who thought VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand declined with age and increased as educational level increased. (age 18-34, 78.3 percent; age 35-54, 74.8 percent; age 55-74, 70.7 percent) (high school graduate, 71.2 percent; some college, 74.9 percent; college graduate, 79.5 percent.)
- Claimants who thought the appeals process was clearly explained steadily increased as age increased. (age 18-34, 54.1 percent; age 35-54, 65.9 percent; age 55-74, 68.9 percent.)
- College graduates were much more likely than claimants with some college education to think the appeals process was clearly explained. (70.5 percent versus 60.3 percent.)

EP 110 - INITIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION <=7 ISSUES

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	16.9	16.6	*	*	15.3	*	*	*	*	*	15.9	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	65.5	66.4	*	*	59.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	65.4	66.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	54.5	55.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	76.0	75.5	*	<i>77.2</i>	<i>76.2</i>	<i>74.3</i>	*	*	*	<i>73.3</i>	<i>75.8</i>	<i>77.9</i>
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	74.9	74.3	*	<i>78.3</i>	<i>74.8</i>	<i>70.7</i>	*	*	*	<i>71.2</i>	<i>74.9</i>	<i>79.5</i>
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	64.7	65.1	*	<i>54.1</i>	<i>65.9</i>	<i>68.9</i>	*	*	*	62.4	60.3	70.5
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	10.0	10.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

Italicized Text – Increased or Decreased with Age or Education Level

EP 120 - REOPENED PENSION

- Men were less likely than women to think VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decisions. (76.8 percent versus 82.7 percent.)
- Claimants who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision increased as age increased. (age 35-54, 74.2; age 55-74, 79.4 percent; and age 75+, 79.7 percent.)
- Claimants who thought VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand increased as age increased. (age 35-54, 73.4 percent; age 55-74, 77.1 percent; and age 75+, 79.7 percent.)
- High school graduates were more likely than claimants with only some high school education to think VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand. (81.8 percent versus 72.5 percent.)

EP 120 - REOPENED PENSION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	14.9	15.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	76.2	73.8	*	*	*	77.8	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	65.8	64.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	53.9	50.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	78.5	76.8	82.7	*	74.2	79.4	79.7	79.7	78.5	77.9	80.2	*
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	76.9	76.4	78.0	*	73.4	77.1	79.7	75.5	72.5	81.8	78.2	*
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	74.4	74.5	76.0	*	73.0	75.8	72.7	68.7	78.3	76.5	*	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	20.8	20.1	*	*	*	22.1	21.7	*	*	22.0	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

Italicized Text – Increased or Decreased with Age or Education Level

EP 130 - DEPENDENCY ISSUES

- Men were much more likely than women to think VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision. (86.5 percent versus 80.8 percent.)
- Respondents ages 55-74 were more likely than respondents age 18-34 to think the appeals process was clearly explained. (85.2 percent versus 77.0 percent)
- The percentage of respondents who received written replies from VA in response to their letters decreased with educational level. (high school graduate, 76.1 percent; some college, 75.6 percent; college graduate, 67.9 percent.)
- College graduates were more likely than claimants with some high school education to think VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand. (86.2 percent versus 76.3 percent.)

EP 130 - DEPENDENCY ISSUES

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	17.7	18.4	15.3	*	18.2	18.8	*	*	*	16.5	17.4	20.5
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	8.2	8.1	*	*	7.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	8.1	8.5	*	*	8.3	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	73.3	74.3	67.9	*	73.5	76.8	*	*	*	76.1	75.6	67.9
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	66.2	66.3	68.1	*	64.4	71.5	*	*	*	69.6	69.2	70.0
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	58.6	58.9	58.1	*	56.8	60.6	*	*	*	<i>60.5</i>	<i>60.2</i>	<i>55.3</i>
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	85.6	86.5	80.8	83.0	86.5	84.4	81.8	86.0	85.0	86.5	85.2	86.8
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	83.5	83.8	82.6	85.7	83.4	83.8	80.0	85.7	76.3	83.2	83.2	86.2
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	80.5	81.0	78.3	77.0	79.1	85.2	78.7	*	78.0	81.7	79.9	80.0
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	15.0	14.2	18.8	*	14.2	15.8	*	*	*	17.6	12.7	12.3

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

Italicized Text – Increased or Decreased with Age or Education Level

NOTE: There were no key results for this EP.

EP 140 - SURVIVOR/DIC/DEATH COMPENSATION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	87.2	*	87.4	*	*	90.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	86.6	*	87.3	*	*	88.9	*	*	*	*	*	*
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	81.0	*	81.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION

- Respondents who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision slightly increased as age increased. (Age 35-54, 82.4 percent; age 55-74, 83.5 percent; and age 75+ 85.4 percent.)
- Claimants with some high school education were much more likely than claimants with less than high school education to receive written replies from VA in response to their letters. (82.8 percent versus 71.9 percent.)
- Claimants with a less than high school education were more likely than claimants with a college degree to think VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision. (85.9 percent versus 74.8 percent.) The percentage of claimants who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision continually decreased as educational level decreased. (less than high school education, 85.9 percent; some high school, 85.7 percent; high school graduate, 84.8 percent; some college, 77.7 percent; and college graduate, 74.8 percent.)
- Respondents with some high school education were more likely than respondents with some college education to think VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand. (81.1 percent versus 74.6 percent.)
- Persons with some high school education were more likely than persons with some college education to think the appeals process was clearly explained. (85.1 percent versus 77.1 percent.)

EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	18.3	17.0	19.1	*	18.8	18.2	18.6	19.1	*	17.5	18.2	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	12.1	12.0	*	*	*	12.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	9.0	8.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	78.6	75.9	81.6	*	77.0	78.7	78.7	71.9	82.8	81.6	75.9	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	60.4	59.7	61.6	*	58.6	60.8	60.4	62.9	67.3	63.7	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	60.4	59.9	62.1	*	58.6	62.5	57.0	60.3	64.6	68.1	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	83.4	82.9	85.1	*	82.4	83.5	85.4	85.9	85.7	84.8	77.7	74.8
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	78.0	79.4	77.0	*	76.4	78.7	78.8	77.1	81.1	79.2	74.6	77.8
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	79.5	80.8	78.6	*	76.7	80.8	80.7	79.2	85.1	79.5	77.1	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	20.0	19.8	20.2	*	19.2	18.4	22.3	22.1	19.5	18.5	20.6	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

Italicized Text – Increased or Decreased with Age or Education Level

EP 180 - INITIAL DISABILITY PENSION

- Respondents age 55-74 were much more likely than respondents age 35-54 to think VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision. (92.2 percent versus 76.1 percent.) and much more likely to think VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand. (87.0 percent and 70.9 percent.)

EP 180 - INITIAL DISABILITY PENSION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	84.0	84.0	*	*	76.1	92.2	*	*	*	82.9	*	*
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	79.3	79.3	*	*	70.9	87.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	68.8	70.0	*	*	*	77.9	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	19.9	20.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

NOTE: There were no key results for this EP.

EP 190 - INITIAL SURVIVORS PENSION

Question	National Total	Male	Female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 - 74	75+	< High School	Some High School	H.S. Grad	Some College	College Grad
1. Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Percent who thought it was very easy/somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letter.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Percent who thought, overall, received all, or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	84.8	*	84.4	*	*	84.8	*	*	*	85.8	*	*
8. Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	83.6	*	83.2	*	*	83.0	*	*	*	80.6	*	*
9. Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	69.0	*	67.8	*	*	62.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	19.5	*	19.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100.*

IV. 1997/1998 TREND ANALYSIS

TREND ANALYSIS

Results: There are 11 statistically significant differences out of all ten correspondence-related questions nationally split by EP Code (90 total), when comparing the results of the 1997 and 1998 surveys. Other significant differences among subgroups (gender, age, and educational attainment) are also highlighted in the tables themselves.

Initial Disability Compensation <=7 (EP 110):

- For Initial Disability Compensation <=7 claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought the appeals process was clearly explained decreased from 69.7 percent in 1997 to 64.7 percent in 1998.

Reopened Pension (EP 120):

- For Reopened Pension claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision decreased from 83.7 percent in 1997 to 78.5 percent in 1998.
- For Reopened Pension claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought the appeals process was clearly explained decreased from 80.2 percent in 1997 to 74.4 percent in 1998.

Dependency Issues (EP 130):

- For Dependency Issue claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought overall they received in writing all or most of what they needed to know from VA decreased from 69.6 percent in 1997 to 58.6 percent in 1998.
- For Dependency Issue claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought VA's letter explained the reason for the decision in a way they could understand decreased from 86.1 percent in 1997 to 83.5 percent in 1998.

Income/Estate/Election (EP 150):

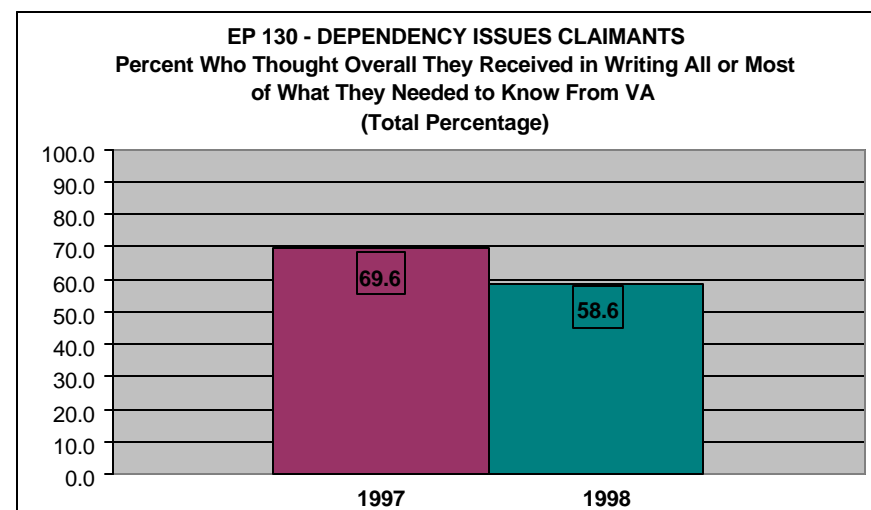
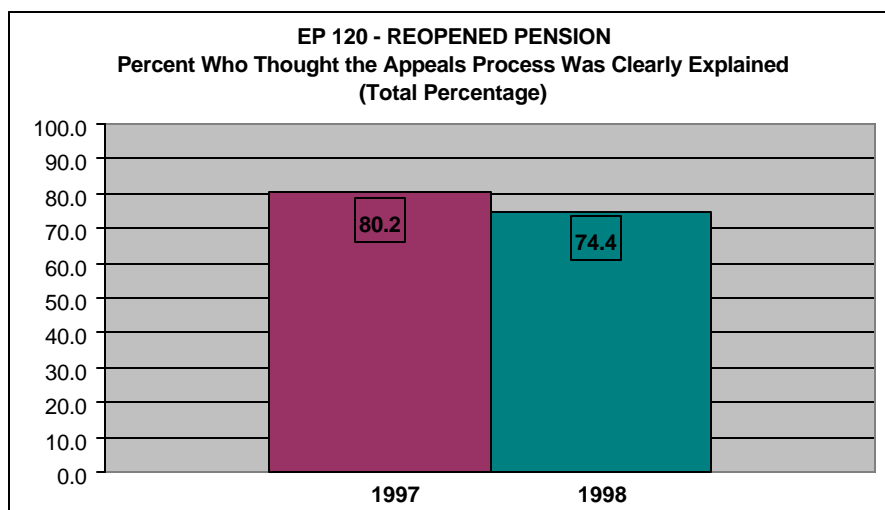
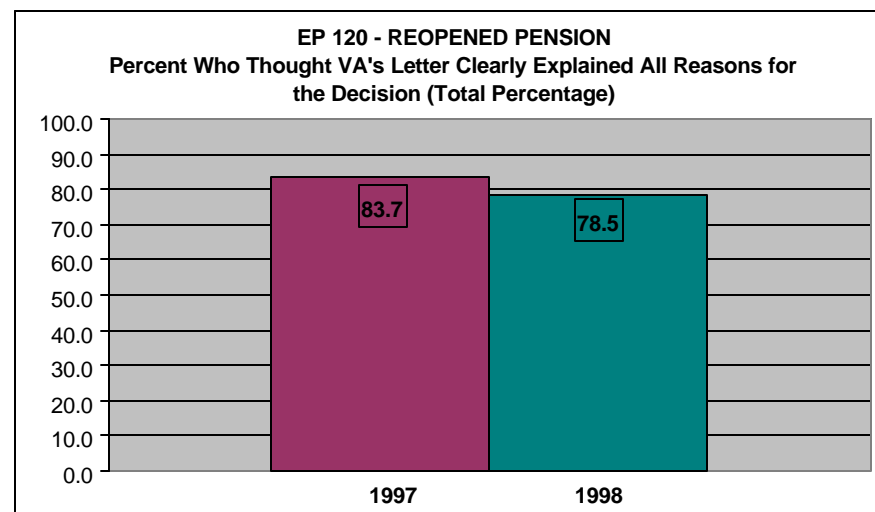
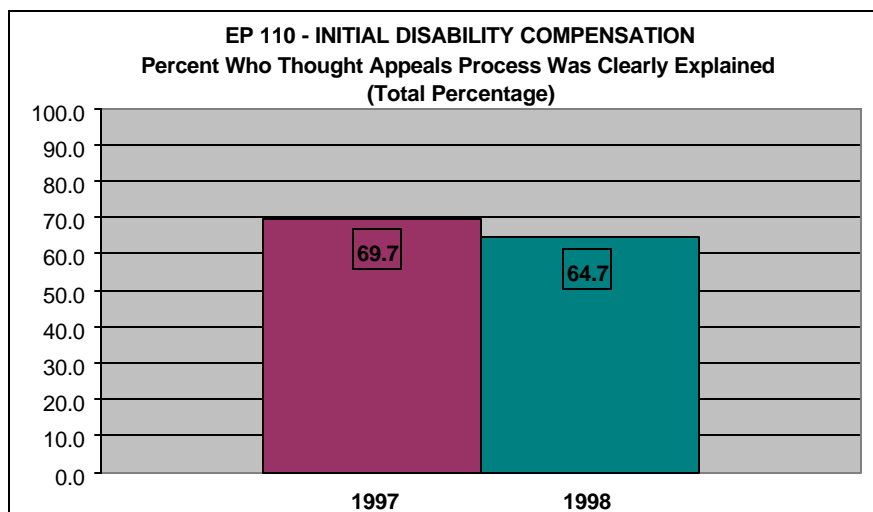
- For Income/Estate/Election claimants, the total percentage of veterans who received written replies from VA in response to their letters decreased from 82.9 percent in 1997 to 78.6 percent in 1998.
- For Income/Estate/Election claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought VA's letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision decreased from 86.0 percent in 1997 to 83.4 percent in 1998.
- For Income/Estate/Election claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought the appeals process was clearly explained decreased from 83.2 percent in 1997 to 79.5 percent in 1998.

Initial Disability Pension (EP 180):

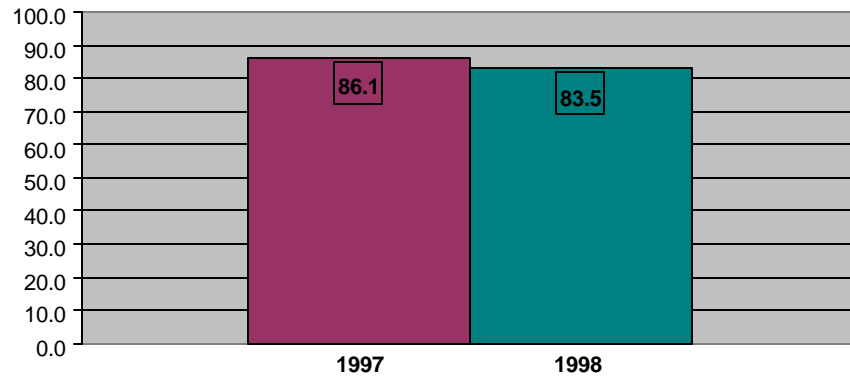
- For Initial Disability Pension claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought VA's letter explained the decision in a way they could understand decreased from 87.8 percent in 1997 to 79.3 percent in 1998.
- For Initial Disability Pension claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought the appeals process was clearly explained decreased from 83.4 percent in 1997 to 68.8 percent in 1998.

Initial Survivors Pension (EP 190):

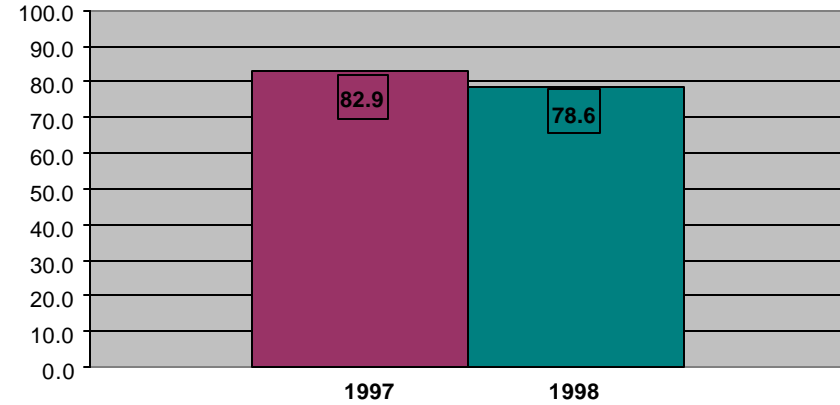
- For New Survivor Pension claimants, the total percentage of veterans who thought the appeals process was clearly explained decreased from 79.4 percent in 1997 to 69.0 percent in 1998.



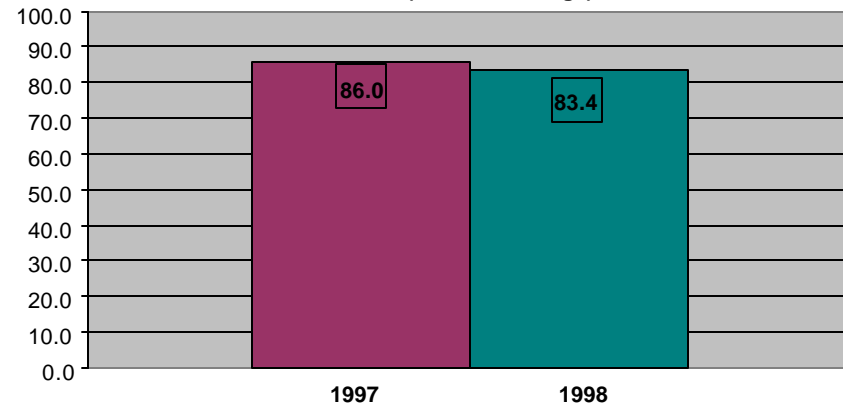
EP 130 - DEPENDENCY ISSUES CLAIMANTS
Percent Who Thought VA's Letter Explained the Reason For the
Decision in a Way They Could Understand
(Total Percentage)



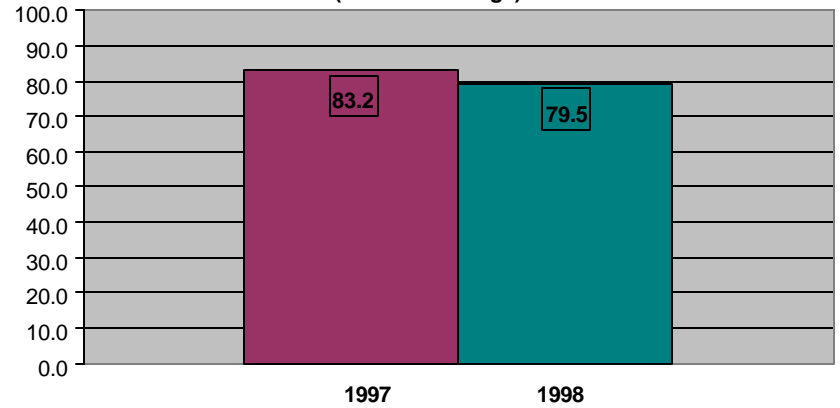
EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION CLAIMANTS
Percent Who Received Written Replies From VA in Response To
Their Letter (Total Percentage)

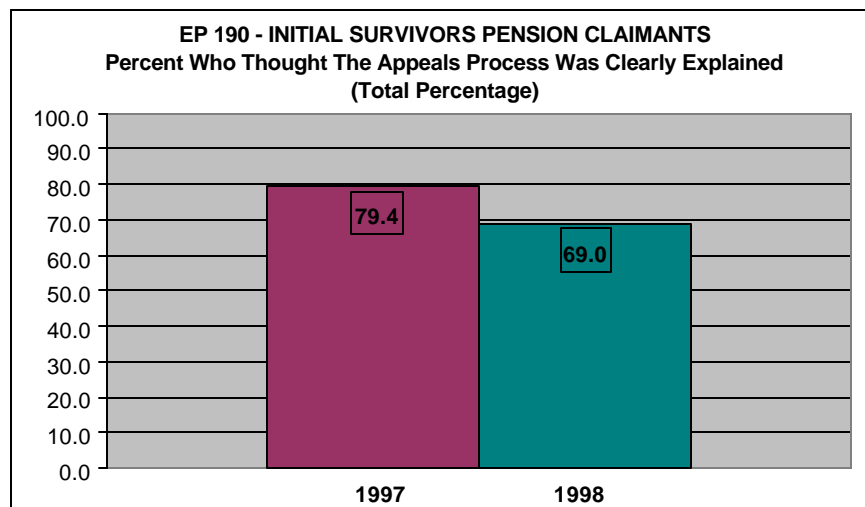
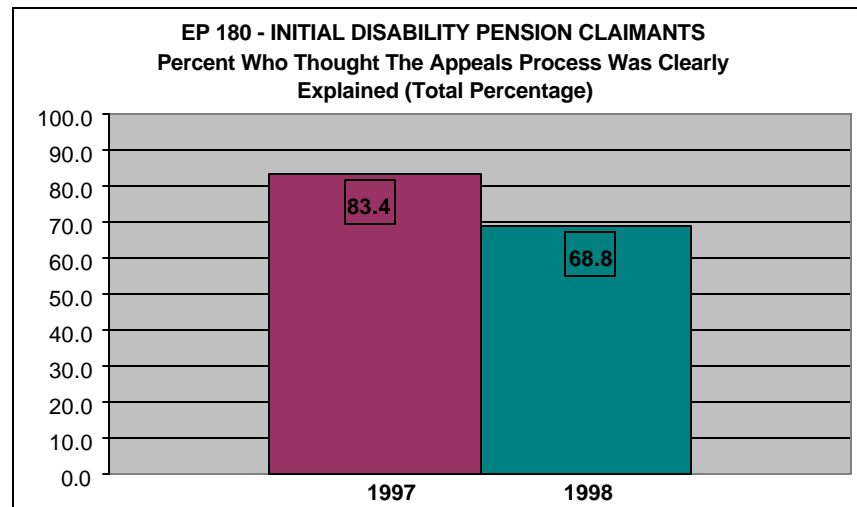
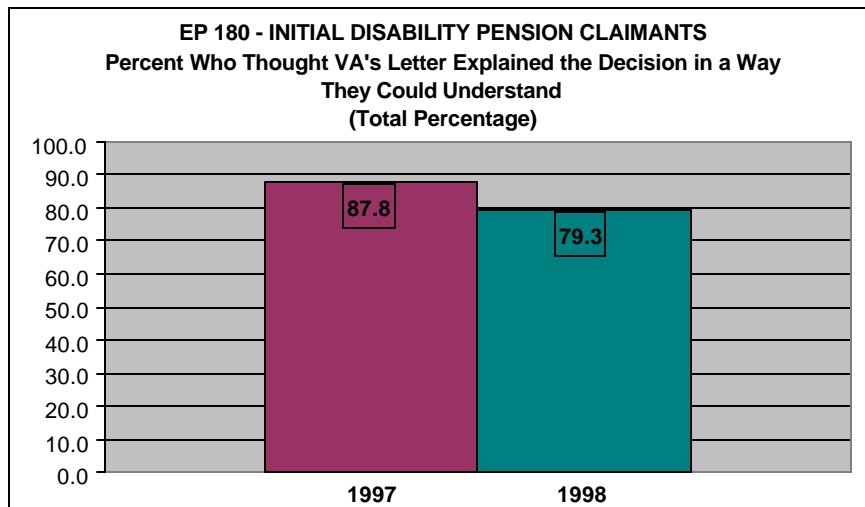


EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION CLAIMANTS
Percent Who Thought VA's Letter Clearly Explained All Reasons For
the Decision (Total Percentage)



EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION CLAIMANTS
Percent Who Thought Appeals Process Was Clearly Explained
(Total Percentage)





TREND DATA

EP 010 - INITIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION 8+

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	80.4	82.4	*	*	81.6	*	*	*	*	*	76.7	82.9
	1997	82.7	83.9	*	*	82.8	*	*	*	*	*	83.2	*
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	73.7	74.8	*	*	74.2	*	*	*	*	*	69.2	*
	1997	71.1	72.1	*	*	69.6	*	*	*	*	*	74.5	*
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	63.1	63.6	*	*	60.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	65.5	66.7	*	*	64.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

EP 020 - REOPENED COMPENSATION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	16.0	15.7	17.9	*	15.4	16.6	*	*	*	13.7	16.2	18.3
	1997	16.6	16.7	16.4	16.1	16.5	17.2	*	*	*	15.8	16.7	17.6
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	7.2	7.2	*	*	8.1	*	*	*	*	*	7.0	*
	1997	7.6	7.6	*	*	7.7	7.8	*	*	*	*	7.5	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	8.1	8.2	*	*	8.8	8.4	*	*	*	*	8.3	*
	1997	8.1	8.2	*	*	8.6	7.8	*	*	*	*	8.4	7.7
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	72.7	72.8	70.9	*	69.6	75.8	79.3	*	*	76.8	72.1	68.7
	1997	73.8	74.4	69.2	61.2	74.0	75.9	76.3	*	78.7	75.3	72.5	73.7
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	58.7	58.4	*	*	58.4	59.6	55.6	*	*	62.2	57.2	60.9
	1997	58.1	57.4	*	*	54.5	59.2	66.5	*	*	59.1	57.2	57.3
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	41.2	41.1	*	*	40.4	45.0	*	*	*	44.9	38.5	43.9
	1997	44.1	43.4	*	*	42.1	45.5	*	*	*	45.7	44.9	44.1
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	73.0	73.0	76.2	77.7	71.6	75.5	70.0	68.4	71.1	72.0	73.8	75.6
	1997	73.8	73.2	79.8	70.3	73.3	75.8	72.8	75.9	74.9	74.0	73.1	74.2
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	68.1	68.0	70.0	70.6	66.7	69.9	68.0	61.0	63.8	67.2	69.0	71.5
	1997	69.3	68.5	75.6	69.5	67.9	70.9	69.7	67.7	67.3	67.8	69.0	72.3
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	72.3	73.1	67.6	67.7	68.1	79.2	73.7	70.0	71.0	73.2	72.6	74.1
	1997	72.8	72.9	70.3	62.1	70.7	77.4	75.0	72.4	73.5	73.5	71.0	75.1
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	14.7	14.7	*	*	12.9	15.8	19.6	*	*	13.9	13.3	14.4
	1997	14.9	14.8	*	*	14.1	14.9	19.2	*	18.4	15.1	14.0	14.4

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

EP 110 - INITIAL DISABILITY COMPENSATION <=7

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	16.9	16.6	*	*	15.3	*	*	*	*	*	15.9	*
	1997	18.4	18.6	*	18.6	18.3	*	*	*	*	*	19.2	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	65.5	66.4	*	*	59.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	63.4	63.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	65.4	66.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	73.2	74.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	54.5	55.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	63.1	64.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	76.0	75.5	*	77.2	76.2	74.3	*	*	*	73.3	75.8	77.9
	1997	79.2	79.4	*	78.5	82.2	72.4	*	*	*	79.3	78.9	81.4
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	74.9	74.3	*	78.3	74.8	70.7	*	*	*	71.2	74.9	79.5
	1997	75.7	75.8	*	75.8	76.2	72.6	*	*	*	72.8	78.2	76.1
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	64.7	65.1	*	54.1	65.9	68.9	*	*	*	62.4	60.3	70.5
	1997	69.7	70.7	*	60.8	73.1	70.5	*	*	*	70.8	69.1	69.1
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	10.0	10.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	12.5	12.9	*	*	12.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 120 - REOPENED PENSION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	14.9	15.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	16.9	16.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	76.2	73.8	*	*	*	77.8	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	77.7	78.3	79.1	*	*	77.2	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	65.8	64.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	70.0	65.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	53.9	50.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	59.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	78.5	76.8	82.7	*	74.2	79.4	79.7	79.7	78.5	77.9	80.2	*
	1997	83.7	80.1	91.1	*	76.1	85.0	88.0	86.3	85.2	86.3	77.8	*
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	76.9	76.4	78.0	*	73.4	77.1	79.7	75.5	72.5	81.8	78.2	*
	1997	79.4	75.8	86.4	*	70.8	81.0	84.3	79.1	78.7	84.2	76.5	*
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	74.4	74.5	76.0	*	73.0	75.8	72.7	68.7	78.3	76.5	*	*
	1997	80.2	78.0	86.6	*	74.7	83.6	82.4	79.6	86.4	82.0	*	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	20.8	20.1	*	*	*	22.1	21.7	*	*	22.0	*	*
	1997	21.2	19.4	25.5	*	*	21.5	25.4	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 130 - DEPENDENCY ISSUES

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	17.7	18.4	15.3	*	18.2	18.8	*	*	*	16.5	17.4	20.5
	1997	17.8	18.0	17.4	15.6	18.3	17.5	*	*	*	16.5	18.0	19.7
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	8.2	8.1	*	*	7.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	9.9	9.8	*	*	9.8	*	*	*	*	*	10.1	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	8.1	8.5	*	*	8.3	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	8.9	8.8	*	*	9.3	*	*	*	*	*	9.2	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	73.3	74.3	67.9	*	73.5	76.8	*	*	*	76.1	75.6	67.9
	1997	76.4	77.0	74.3	*	76.4	79.4	*	*	*	77.9	74.5	77.0
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	66.2	66.3	68.1	*	64.4	71.5	*	*	*	69.6	69.2	70.0
	1997	70.4	69.2	73.4	*	66.9	74.7	*	*	*	71.7	68.1	70.7
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	58.6	58.9	58.1	*	56.8	60.6	*	*	*	60.5	60.2	55.3
	1997	69.6	70.0	67.6	*	67.0	74.8	*	*	*	65.7	66.5	73.0
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	85.6	86.5	80.8	83.0	86.5	84.4	81.8	86.0	85.0	86.5	85.2	86.8
	1997	87.7	87.8	87.5	88.5	87.1	88.4	91.3	91.0	88.6	91.1	86.4	85.9
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	83.5	83.8	82.6	85.7	83.4	83.8	80.0	85.7	76.3	83.2	83.2	86.2
	1997	86.1	86.0	87.0	88.8	85.6	86.8	86.0	85.7	87.2	87.4	84.2	87.7
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	80.5	81.0	78.3	77.0	79.1	85.2	78.7	*	78.0	81.7	79.9	80.0
	1997	82.9	84.5	75.5	80.4	81.9	86.8	*	90.3	84.1	86.1	80.7	82.5
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	15.0	14.2	18.8	*	14.2	15.8	*	*	*	17.6	12.7	12.3
	1997	16.2	15.9	17.5	*	14.9	18.4	*	*	*	15.6	15.6	15.7

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 140 - SURVIVOR/DIC/DEATH COMPENSATION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	87.2	*	87.4	*	*	90.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	90.5	*	90.4	*	*	90.3	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	86.6	*	87.3	*	*	88.9	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	83.0	*	83.3	*	*	79.7	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	81.0	*	81.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	86.4	*	86.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 150 - INCOME/ESTATE/ELECTION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	18.3	17.0	19.1	*	18.8	18.2	18.6	19.1	*	17.5	18.2	*
	1997	20.5	19.6	21.4	*	19.6	19.7	23.1	22.5	19.5	20.0	20.2	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	12.1	12.0	*	*	*	12.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	11.9	12.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	9.0	8.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	11.4	11.6	11.0	*	*	10.9	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	78.6	75.9	81.6	*	77.0	78.7	78.7	71.9	82.8	81.6	75.9	*
	1997	82.9	82.8	82.8	*	79.7	85.7	81.7	82.8	87.0	83.8	81.6	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	60.4	59.7	61.6	*	58.6	60.8	60.4	62.9	67.3	63.7	*	*
	1997	60.0	58.5	62.2	*	60.1	62.0	54.4	62.3	*	64.8	56.2	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	60.4	59.9	62.1	*	58.6	62.5	57.0	60.3	64.6	68.1	*	*
	1997	61.3	60.6	62.4	*	61.0	63.0	59.3	*	*	65.6	58.0	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	83.4	82.9	85.1	*	82.4	83.5	85.4	85.9	85.7	84.8	77.7	74.8
	1997	86.0	85.5	86.8	*	83.1	88.0	85.5	88.0	88.8	87.4	80.8	83.7
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	78.0	79.4	77.0	*	76.4	78.7	78.8	77.1	81.1	79.2	74.6	77.8
	1997	79.8	81.0	77.9	*	79.2	81.5	77.8	79.9	80.5	80.9	77.5	81.6
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	79.5	80.8	78.6	*	76.7	80.8	80.7	79.2	85.1	79.5	77.1	*
	1997	83.2	83.7	82.1	*	80.8	84.0	83.6	81.7	83.7	86.9	78.4	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	20.0	19.8	20.2	*	19.2	18.4	22.3	22.1	19.5	18.5	20.6	*
	1997	22.9	21.6	24.4	*	16.6	23.8	26.0	23.7	23.7	22.7	20.5	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 180 - INITIAL DISABILITY PENSION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	84.0	84.0	*	*	76.1	92.2	*	*	*	82.9	*	*
	1997	88.4	87.6	*	*	88.5	89.3	*	*	*	87.6	*	*
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	79.3	79.3	*	*	70.9	87.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	87.8	87.5	*	*	86.0	88.2	*	*	*	93.8	*	*
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	68.8	70.0	*	*	*	77.9	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	83.4	82.3	*	*	*	82.7	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	19.9	20.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	20.2	20.6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences

EP 190 - INITIAL SURVIVORS PENSION

		Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55-74	Age 75+	< High School	Some H.S.	H.S. Grad/ Equiv.	Some College	College Grad/>
Percent who phoned to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who visited VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who wrote to VA to get an explanation of a VA letter.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who received written reply from VA in response to letter from veteran.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought it was very easy/ somewhat easy to understand VA's written reply to veterans letters.	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought, overall, received all or most of what they needed to know from VA (written).	1998	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who thought letter clearly explained all reasons for the decision.	1998	84.8	*	84.4	*	*	84.8	*	*	*	85.8	*	*
	1997	89.2	*	89.2	*	*	87.6	93.0	*	*	90.5	*	*
Percent who thought letter explained decision in a way the veteran could understand.	1998	83.6	*	83.2	*	*	83.0	*	*	*	80.6	*	*
	1997	83.3	*	83.7	*	*	81.4	*	*	*	84.8	*	*
Percent who thought appeals process was clearly explained.	1998	69.0	*	67.8	*	*	62.0	*		*	*	*	*
	1997	79.4	*	79.5	*	*	77.4	*	*	*	*	*	*
Percent who would prefer mail as the method of contact if all methods were equal.	1998	19.5	*	19.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	1997	20.9	*	21.3	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

**Too few cases to base a percentage on, fewer than 100*

Bolded Text – Significant Differences